E PLURIBUS
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WE HERE at The Maple Press Company in historic York, Pennsylvania are indeed happy to present you with our Sixth Annual Keepsake, *The Nine Capitals of the United States* by Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh. . . . In the past five years, we have been able to send you our Keepsake during the Christmas Holidays, but this year, because of the extreme pressure of the publishing business, we were compelled to delay publication until today . . . We hope this delay has not dampened your spirits for our book, as we believe this equals and in some respects is superior to our previous efforts . . . We hope the year 1948 will be one of Continued Happiness and Prosperity.

H. H. Wirebaugh Jr.

President

The Nine Capitals of the United States

The Nine Capitals

of the

UNITED STATES

by Robert Fortenbaugh

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dedicated

to a few who have done so much for so many—

the founding fathers of the republic

Greetings

IN THE spirit of the Christmas Season we Greet you, and Wish you Peace of Mind and Good Will of Heart. In this New Year we Greet you, and Wish you and yours the Continuance of these and all other Blessings for 1948 *and for all the Years to Come. . . . Our Annual Greeting Book presents an Account of some significant History related to the Early Years of our Independence. These were years of uncertainty and perplexity; no one could be sure that the New Nation, founded on New Principles, would survive. Even the location of the Seat of Government was unsettled until, with the adoption of a Constitution for a Federal Union, governmental organization was finally completed and a decision was made to locate and establish permanently a National Capital. . . . This Account was written by Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh who is completing twenty-five years as Adeline Sager Professor of History in Gettys-*

burg College at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dr. Fortenbaugh is the author of several books and numerous articles in periodical publications on subjects related to the History of the United States. . . . The author believes that one effective means of awakening and confirming True Patriotism is through better understanding of our National History. Those who better know "Whence We Came" have a surer understanding of "Whither We Are Going." When the Purposes of our Forefathers are truly understood, and when an Appreciation of the Labors and Sacrifices which they gave to realize their Purposes is stimulated, then Americans are more likely to value and protect their Great Heritage of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." . . . To the great end of contributing to this Better Understanding it is hoped that a small contribution may here be made. With this Hope we present The Nine Capitals of the United States.

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The Nine Capitals of the United States

Introduction

A CAPITAL is, by definition, that city, town, or village from which any political division is governed. There the authority of the government of the division is exercised or, under peculiar conditions, at least its direction is maintained. A capitol is a building in which such government or direction is carried on, particularly marked by the presence, in session, of the representative legislative body or bodies having jurisdiction over the appropriate division.

Following the Treaty of Paris in 1763 which ended the long rivalry of France and Great Britain for dominance in North America, the latter found herself heavily in debt and confronted with new imperial problems. New imperial policies were accordingly introduced which antagonized certain powerful groups in the thirteen British colonies and led to measures for the protection of their interests and their rights as Englishmen. For many years the inhabitants of these thirteen colonies had recognized

that they had common interests which should be commonly defended, but efforts at some kind of intercolonial organization had not been successful because of the absence of compelling issues. With the Stamp Act of 1765 and other laws and policies introduced in pursuit of these new imperial policies, colonial resistance began to develop and common action appeared to be both very wise and necessary. The first independently-called intercolonial congress met in New York in October 1765 and is known as the Stamp Act Congress. Delegates came from all of the colonies except Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and New Hampshire, but from these came many unofficial messages of encouragement. This resulted in petitions to the king and parliament and a declaration of the rights of Americans. In the latter was the first statement of a purpose common to all the colonies. Even though the Stamp Act was repealed, other grievous laws and principles were promulgated and common colonial resistance continued.

In the years that followed, committees of several kinds were organized in all of the colonies in an effort to unify action against what were considered to be oppressive British measures. Probably the most effective of the committees were the "committees of correspondence" in all of the colonies or provinces. These were effective in organizing the several provinces as units for action. However, greater possibilities from this device were seen, and the Virginia

House of Burgesses on March 12, 1773 passed resolves looking toward the establishment of Intercolonial Committees of Correspondence. This action was most warmly supported by the other colonies. The next step toward revolutionary government was to develop the Provincial Congresses, and from that to a Continental Congress was a short stride. Three events of the spring and summer of 1774 hastened the realization of this purpose: (1) the attempt of the British ministry to force taxed tea upon the Americans; (2) the dramatic protest of the Boston Tea Party and other much less publicized attacks upon the tea ships and (3) the so-called Intolerable Acts passed by the British Parliament in retaliation for the Boston Tea Party.

Again, Virginia took the lead and, on May 24, 1774 taking account of the effects of the Boston Port Bill (one of the Intolerable Acts), resolved that June 1st, on which day the Bill was to become effective,

> . . . be set apart, by the Members of this House as a day of Fasting, Humiliation, and of Prayer, devoutly to implore the divine interposition for averting the heavy Calamity which threatens the destruction to our Civil Rights, and the Evils of civil War; to give us one heart and one Mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper means, every injury to American Rights; and that the Minds of his Majesty and his Parliament, may be inspired from above with Wisdom, Moderation,

> and Justice, to remove from the loyal People of America all cause of danger from a continued pursuit of Measures pregnant with their ruin.

On May 26th as the Burgesses were assembled in the old capitol at Williamsburg a message from the royal governor Lord Dunmore, was handed to the speaker commanding the House to attend his Excellency, immediately, in the Council Chamber. There the governor said to them:

> . . . Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, I have in my hand a Paper published by Order of your House, conceived in such Terms as reflect highly upon his Majesty and the Parliament of Great Britain; which makes it necessary for me to dissolve you; and you are therefore dissolved accordingly.

It is interesting to note that George Washington, who had presided at the meeting, went directly to dine with Lord and Lady Dunmore. Political disagreement did not yet disturb social intercourse.

The Virginia Burgesses were not to be defeated in their purpose to meet and deliberate on the important issues. They, therefore, convened in the Raleigh Tavern, a few hundred yards away from the capitol, and on May 27th an Association, signed by eighty-nine members, contained the following significant passage:

> . . . it is herewith recommended to the Committee of Correspondence, that they communicate, with their several corresponding committees, on the expediency of appointing deputies from the several colonies of British America, to meet in the general congress, at such place *annually* as shall be thought most convenient; there to deliberate on those general measures which the united interests of America may from time to time require.

The response of the Massachusetts House of Representatives was to agree heartily with Virginia's proposition, and on June the 17th to adopt a resolution which fixed the place and date of such a meeting of elected representatives from the several colonies. Other colonial bodies generally approved the idea and accepted the suggestions as to place and date.

The "Continental Congress" was the name given by common consent to the body of delegates of the American Colonies (afterward to become the States) and which first assembled in September, 1774, and again in May, 1775 as an advisory council for common colonial action. Eventually it became the central agency of government for the States, serving as such until it was superseded, March 4 1789, by the United States Congress under the Federal Constitution. The title adopted at the first meeting held September-October, 1774 was simply "The Congress" but the term "Continental" soon was prefixed to distinguish

it from the several provincial congresses. After George Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army (on June 15, 1775) Congress definitely advanced from being a mere clearing-house of colonial opinion toward becoming the superintending power over the unified colonial cause. For nearly six years thereafter with little authority other than general acquiescence, it not only took over general direction of the War but became the collective voice of the colonies, soon to become independent States, for a multitude of their other common activities as well. After the Articles of Confederation were put into force (effective with Maryland's ratification on March 1, 1781), Congress was on a constitutional basis but still the "Continental Congress," although a distinction was sometimes emphasized by employing for this period the more distinctive title, "The Congress of the Confederation." The principal change was that some things which had been done before in a manner more or less irregular had now been regularized.

The following account will deal with the places at which the Continental Congress, and for a shorter period the Congress of the United States, held formal sessions until a permanent "capital" was fully established for the national government which had its practical beginning in the "First Continental Congress." From Carpenter's Hall to the National Capitol is the setting.

Chronological Table of the Capitals

FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS:

Monday, September 5, 1774 to Wednesday, October 24, 1774	*Philadelphia*	Carpenter's Hall

SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS:

Wednesday, May 10, 1775 to Thursday, December 12, 1776	*Philadelphia*	State-House
Friday, December 20, 1776 to Thursday, February 27, 1777	*Baltimore*	Henry Fite's House
Tuesday, March 4, 1777 to Thursday, September 18, 1777	*Philadelphia*	State-House
Saturday, September 27, 1777	*Lancaster*	Court-House
Tuesday, September 30, 1777 to Saturday, June 27, 1778	*York*	Court-House
Thursday, July 2, 1778 to Thursday, March 1, 1781	*Philadelphia*	College Hall, then State-House

CONGRESS UNDER THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

Thursday, March 1, 1781 to Saturday, June 21, 1783	*Philadelphia*	State-House
Monday, June 30, 1783 to Tuesday, November 4, 1783	*Princeton*	"Prospect," then Nassau Hall
Wednesday, November 26, 1783 to Thursday, August 19, 1784	*Annapolis*	State-House
Monday, November 1, 1784 to Friday, December 24, 1784	*Trenton*	French Arms Tavern
Tuesday, January 11, 1785 to an indefinite date in autumn of 1788	*New York*	City Hall, then Fraunce's Tavern

CONGRESS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

Wednesday, March 4, 1789 to Thursday, August 12, 1790	*New York*	Federal Hall
Monday, December 6, 1790 to Wednesday, May 14, 1800	*Philadelphia*	Philadelphia County Building—Congress Hall
Monday, November 17, 1800	*Washington*	Capitol

At Philadelphia

THE place and the date of the meeting of the "First Continental Congress," as proposed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives and approved by other provincial bodies, was in Philadelphia, on September 1 1774. Because of the difficulties of travel the delegates were

slow in arriving and the formal meeting of the assembly was four days late in opening. This was not an unusual occurrence in those days because of difficulties of travel which can not be appreciated today. The *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 1774–1789 (Edited from the Original Records in the Library of Congress by Worthington Chauncey Ford, Chief, The Division of Manuscripts. Thirty-four volumes. 1904–1937) records for posterity the beginning of its official career in this brief statement:

Monday, September 5, 1774

A number of the Delegates chosen and appointed by the Several Colonies and Provinces in North America to meet and hold a Congress at Philadelphia assembled at the Carpenter's Hall: . . .

John Adams, who reported in detail the proceedings of important meetings in this period, wrote thus of the events of that important day:

The members met at the City (or Smith's) Tavern, at ten o'clock and walked to the Carpenter's Hall, where they took a view of the room and of the chamber where is an excellent library. . . . The general cry was, That this was a good room, and the question was put, whether we were satisfied with this room? and it passed in the affirmative. A very few were for the negative, and they were chiefly from Pennsylvania and New York.

The meeting-place was the hall of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1724, and composed of master builders who were real artists and took a genuine creative interest in their work. Joseph Galloway one of the most influential delegates from Pennsylvania had been authorized to offer the State-House as a more suitable place for meeting, but it is most likely that the beautiful lines and the compact arrangement of attractive Carpenter's Hall pleased the delegates even as they impress the visitor to-day.

Philadelphia had been chosen as the meeting-place both because of its central location, so far as accessibility was concerned, and because of its size and importance. Although not founded until the year 1682 it had immediately begun to grow in population and importance until in 1774 it had an estimated population of upwards of 40,000 and was not only the metropolis of America but also the second largest city in the British Empire. As the home of Benjamin Franklin, it had advanced in culture and refinement, while its port facilities and the activity particularly of its Quaker merchants brought it great wealth. Its public buildings and public houses offered the best accommodations for the comfort and convenience of large numbers of visitors. Seven newspapers were published there.

The First Continental Congress had been summoned by popular demand—not to seek independence but for

liberty, as Americans understood the word at that time. Congress was expected to take steps to ward off parliamentary wrath, vigorously to assert colonial rights, and do its part in restoring imperial relations to the former happy status. It was an extra-legal body, chosen by the direct representatives of the people of the several provinces, and instructed by them. Therefore the patriot party was in control of the situation. Yet moderates in opinion were present, only those who held the most extreme conservative feelings were not at the meeting. The varied interests of the colonies were well represented, Georgia alone failing to send at least one delegate. The total number in attendance was fifty-five.

Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, was chosen president of the Congress. He struck a note of caution, but the introduction of the resolves of the convention of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, threw the Congress into the hands of the radicals. These resolves declared that no obedience was due to the Coercive ("Intolerable") Acts which should be viewed "as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America." Congress then endorsed them, and the radicals had taken the lead away from the moderates. A series of retaliatory measures against the Coercive Acts in the form of new and stringent non-importation, non-exportation, and non-consumption agreements, were also adopted. This "Association," it was hoped, would wring

immediate concessions from Parliament. This was the most important work of the Congress. However, a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, addressed to the people of Great Britain and the colonies, and, as a sop to the moderates, a petition to the king for redress, were also passed at the same time.

The king, who was in effect the "political boss" in the administration of the government at that time under Lord North, had no intention of giving redress or making concessions. The reaction of the British government to these addresses arrived in America just as the news of Lexington and Concord was being shouted throughout the length and breadth of the land. In anticipation of just such a result, the Continental Congress had on Saturday, October 22nd:

> *Resolved*, as the Opinion of this Congress, that it will be necessary that another Congress shall be held on the tenth day of May next, unless the redress of grievances, which we have desired, be obtained before that time. And we recommend, that the same be held at the city of Philadelphia and that all of the Colonies in North-America chuse (sic) deputies, as soon as possible, to attend such Congress.

On Wednesday, October the 26th, the business of the Congress having been completed, and after thanking the

"honourable House of Representatives of the Colony of Pennsylvania" for their "politeness and hospitality" to the Congress while in session, "The Continental Congress then dissolved itself."

Accordingly, on Wednesday, May 10, 1775, "agreeable to their appointment and the orders received from their respective colonies," delegates met at Philadelphia.

> The Members being convened in the State House proceeded to the choice of a president, when upon a Motion the Honorable Peyton Randolph was unanimously chosen President.

Charles Thomson was likewise unanimously chosen Secretary, and Congress was ready to take up its weighty business. The prophetic words of Patrick Henry were still ringing in the ears of the delegates:

> It is vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry "peace, peace" but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle?

Far to the west of the scene of the first clash in Massachusetts, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys were raising the standard of revolt after successfully crashing through the defenses of Crown Point and Fort Ticon-

deroga. Control of affairs throughout the colonial area were rapidly being taken from the hands of hesitant and law-abiding men, and the Congress had little to do but register, in one form or another, accomplished facts. It was as distinguished a group as ever assembled in America and several shades of opinion as to the proper course to take in resisting the Mother Country's attacks were represented. Radicals were successful in eventually pushing through their program of accepting war and of declaring independence only after a severe struggle. John Dickinson again raised his conciliatory voice, and he persuaded the delegates to adopt another petition to send to the king. However, the real temper of the Congress was revealed in the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms, the joint product of Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson. Its inference was unmistakable. They would be free men, no matter the cost.

As the May days passed and June came on, military preparations were made, and Colonel George Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of all the American forces. Leaving his seat in the Congress on June 23rd, he set out for Cambridge where he assumed his high position. Shortly afterward, Congress authorized a project which could be construed only as an offensive movement—an expedition to Quebec under Benedict Arnold, to bring Canada into the Union as the fourteenth colony.

Independence was still far from the purpose of most of the members of Congress and of the vast majority of the American people. As the months passed, however, the difficulties of prosecuting a war while still in the empire became more and more apparent. Foreign aid was most desirable; the policy of commercial pressure was breaking down; the attitude of the king was uncompromising, and finally all trade and intercourse with the Thirteen Colonies were interdicted by Parliament. These factors helped the radicals who were for independence, and set the stage for the success of the appeal of Tom Paine's fine pamphlet *Common Sense*. Events now moved rapidly, and on the 15th of May Congress advised the respective assemblies and conventions of the united colonies to establish independent state governments. On June 7th Richard Henry Lee obeying instructions from his state moved, in words never to be forgotten,

> That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. . . . That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign alliances. . . . That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective colonies for their consideration.

A terrific debate followed but Lee's motion was carried on July 2. In the meantime Congress had appointed a committee to prepare a formal declaration "setting forth the causes which impelled us to this mighty resolution." On July 4th the Declaration of Independence, written chiefly by Thomas Jefferson, was adopted. The Pennsylvania State-House was on the way of becoming "Independence Hall," the Shrine of American Liberty.

The Second Continental Congress continued as the agency of leadership and control of the United Colonies. Of course, the conduct of the war was the most pressing interest, but the practical operation of a general sovereign government naturally became its responsibility. There was no other branch of government, so all functions of the government had to be recognized and accepted as responsibilities by the Congress.

December, 1776 found the fortunes of the new government at a very low point. Washington's army had been driven from New York, across New Jersey, and finally took refuge in Pennsylvania south of the Delaware River. Barely 3000 men composed the only active fighting force defending the American cause. It was truly as Tom Paine then wrote that these were "the times that tried men's souls." Congress fled from Philadelphia in the face of the British advance, and left Washington to face the situation as best he could. Knowing that Cornwallis' vanguard was

at Trenton, Washington re-crossed the Delaware River on Christmas night, and then captured most of the Hessian force at that place. Cornwallis, aroused to action, quickly concentrated his army to destroy the American army.

Washington, leaving his camp-fires burning brightly slipped away and administered a severe defeat to three British regiments at Princeton on January 3, 1777. These successful attacks by General Washington revived the lagging spirits of the American patriots, and turned despair into hope. Washington retired to Morristown, New Jersey where he entered winter-quarters, and prepared for the campaigns of the spring.

The entire aspect of the situation was now changed. Despair was turned to hope, and the cause which had seemed lost was revived. From his position at Morristown Washington so threatened the British line of communication that they returned to New York. Yet the small force of 4000 men left to Washington, undergoing suffering and hardships surpassed only by those endured the next winter at Valley Forge, might not have survived but for British inaction which resulted from antipathy to winter fighting.

At Baltimore

WHEN the Congress learned of the British advance through New Jersey, in the interest of its safety in all contingencies, it took the following action:

> *Resolved*, That this Congress be, for the present, adjourned to the town of Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, to meet on the 20th inst., unless a sufficient number to make a Congress shall be there sooner assembled; . . . .

Thus was begun the unhappy experience of frequently changing the location of the seat of the government. The

journals of the Continental Congress show that on Friday, December the 20th "Congress met according to adjournment" in its new location.

Baltimore Town (so it was called, not being incorporated as a city until 1797) was vastly different from Philadelphia. First settlement of the land on its site was made in 1662 but its true founding was not accomplished until by act of 1729. In 1752 there were only twenty-five houses, but in 1775 it claimed a population of nearly 6,000. Though it was growing up, its streets were still unpaved and its houses were mostly wooden. It, however, published two weekly newspapers and was fast becoming prosperous as an important center of privateering. Later it was to become an important rival of Philadelphia for the very rich trade of the Susquehanna Valley. All in all it hardly deserved the characterization of Dr. Benjamin Rush of the city of Philadelphia as "the Damdest Hole in the world." It had its own peculiar attractions which were not lost on some of the members.

The Baltimore Committee of Correspondence offered Congress the use of the old Court-House, and even had it repaired for its use. Congress, however, chose to meet according to the diary of John Adams,

> in the last house at the west end of Market Street, on the south side of the street; a long chamber, with two fireplaces, two large closets and two doors.

The house belonged to Henry Fite, who rented it to Congress for three months for 60 pounds. "Congress Hall," as it was afterwards called, was a spacious three-story and dormered attic brick building—"10 windows long, with 3 doors, and 5 windows deep with a center door on the short side." It stood on the corner of Liberty and Baltimore Street, as Market Street is now named. Just beyond it was a sixty-acre tract that was laid out and annexed to the town in 1782. "Congress Hall" was destroyed by fire on September 4, 1860, but a bronze tablet marks the approximate site of the building.

The business of Congress while in Baltimore was serious and exacting and was trying to the patience of the members. Throughout the entire session there was inadequate representation which impeded proper expedition of the pressing business. Further, it was a dark period for the patriot cause. Congress had come only because the British had been sweeping Washington's army before it. Therefore it was felt necessary to take a most unusual and potentially dangerous step. On December 27th Congress committed to George Washington the almost dictatorial powers to carry on the war. These, limited for a period of six months, authorized him to raise sixteen battalions, 3,000 light horse, three regiments of artillery and a corps of engineers for the duration. They further authorized him to appoint the officers; and to take any private property

needed for the army; to arrest any person who refused to take Continental money or manifested a lack of sympathy with the American cause. Some hope for the cause was raised when on December 31st an aid-de-camp to General Washington delivered a letter to Congress from the General telling of the success at Trenton six days before. A silken standard captured from the Hessians there was proudly hung in the meeting hall. A few days later news came of the victory at Princeton and before the end of January they learned that almost all of New Jersey had been recovered, and that Washington and his army were safe for the winter at Morristown.

Some of the members brought their wives with them and helped enliven the social life of the little town in the winter time. Some rented houses, or found lodgings in private homes. Residents entertained delegates, some most elaborately. However, since no balls or assemblies or theatrical performances were given, it is likely that the stay of Congress must have been, on the whole, rather boring after the brisk social life of Philadelphia. One certain cause for complaint was the high cost of living. One delegate described Baltimore as "This extravagant hole where with all possible Oeconomy we live at the rate of 50 shillings per day." Another wrote of, "the extravagant price of living here, the poorest board without Liquor, a Dollar a Day, . . . and everything else in proportion."

Of course, this was not peculiar to Baltimore. Many of the measures which Congress debated have a familiar ring. They discussed the advisability of regulating wages and controlling prices. Members called attention to the failure of controls already in effect, which clearly indicates that the black market is nothing new in the present day.

As the threat of possible British occupation of Pennsylvania passed away, Congress was impatient to return to Philadelphia. President Hancock opposed this because the printers of Continental currency had followed Congress to Baltimore, and "set to work, and as money is so urgently needed . . . it would not be prudent." Forty-two gentlemen from Baltimore Town and County had been appointed by Congress to sign and countersign a large issue.

Finally, conditions made it possible safely to return and on Thursday, February 27th Congress "*Resolved*, That when Congress adjourns this evening, it be adjourned to meet at Philadelphia, on Wednesday next." So Baltimore ceased to be the capital city that day. There is, however a satisfaction in noting that, with all of the difficulties and dissatisfactions attending the ten-weeks' stay, Samuel Adams could write, in the earlier part of the session, "We have done more important business in three weeks than we had done, or I believe should have done in Philadelphia in six months." Another wrote, "There is more unanimity in Congress than ever before."

At Philadelphia Again

THE members were slow in making the journey from Baltimore to Philadelphia to take up their business in the former location. Some met on March 4th as voted but the lack of attendance made necessary the record in the journal as thus: "Congress being adjourned on the 4th and from thence on, from day to day, met March 12." The British did not feel so confident of a quick victory over the rebellious colonists, but from the American view-

point the prospects of the immediate future were not very encouraging. Try as it might, Congress could not raise an army large and strong enough to insure a full and much needed victory. The call for soldiers was slightly heeded, partly because the people were accustomed to look to the states for political authority, and had no great respect or love for the newborn congress, partly because of inherited jealousy of a standing army, and partly because there had in the past been so little popular participation in government that the ordinary man felt little responsibility on its account. Making allowance for the tories and the slaves, there were in the thirteen states in 1777 perhaps 200,000 men of military age. Yet Washington, with all the power which Congress had given him and the very liberal terms which he chose to offer, had in the early spring of 1777 no more than 4000 in the continental army. Of course, he had at his call many more militia, but the experience of the preceding year taught him to esteem them very, very lightly. This was the situation when Congress began its second stay in Philadelphia.

The British, determined to regain the advantage of which the activities of Washington in late December and early January had deprived them, planned to concentrate three columns on the upper Hudson River in order to cut in two the area of principal resistance. General Burgoyne's column was committed to move from Montreal by way of

Lake Champlain; St. Leger's was to march from Oswego through the Mohawk Valley, and Howe's was to advance up the Hudson from New York. Through the carelessness of a home official, General Howe did not receive the order to participate in this concentration of forces, and instead made plans to capture Philadelphia and strike a serious blow to American prestige.

In the meantime, the Congress was engaged with the multiplicity of details involved in fighting the war and in directing the many common interests of the united political units now known as the states. One most important and permanent interest was considered and agreed to, namely the adoption of a design for a common flag for the states united in a common cause. Before this, a large variety of flags had been used by troops and ships and this was considered disadvantageous. In late May, 1777 a committee consisting of General George Washington, Robert Morris and George Ross was appointed to study and report on a general standard.

On June 14, 1777 the Continental Congress resolved

> that the flag of the thirteen United States be of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; and that the union be thirteen stars, white, in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

There is no justifiable reason to doubt the general truthfulness of the conventional story that the above committee

called upon Mrs. Betsy Ross who kept an upholsterer's shop on Arch Street in Philadelphia and asked her if she could make a flag after the design which they showed her, the same following the specifications of the act of Congress. She said that she could try, but suggested that the stars be changed from six points to five.

It is well-known that she had been making flags for the government for several years. A draft on the continental treasury, May, 1777, sets forth: "Pay Betsey Ross £14, 12s. 2d. for flags for fleet in Delaware River." She continued in the occupation of flag making for some years. The symbol of American unity was thus added to other evidences of solidarity to promote the cause of independence and national unity.

The stay of the Congress in Philadelphia was soon doomed to end. General Howe embarked his army on a great flotilla of 250 vessels and set out from New York to attack the city of Philadelphia. He chose the longer way by Chesapeake Bay instead of the Delaware which was well-fortified, so that on August 25th he reached the head of the Chesapeake at Elkton, Maryland, thirty-five miles southwest of Philadelphia. Washington had ample time to move from New York to try to protect the capital, and so on September 11th the two armies faced one another on opposite sides of Brandywine Creek. Howe's stronger force and his excellent generalship won the day, and after

some effective delaying operations by Washington, the British occupied Philadelphia in late September. A later surprise attack on the British at Germantown failed.

The news of the approach of the army of the enemy occasioned great alarm in the capital city. On September 14th the Congress resolved that if it should be obliged to remove from Philadelphia to assure its safety, "Lancaster shall be the place at which they shall meet." It was further resolved on the same day,

> That the public papers be put under the care of Mr. Clark, and that he be empowered, upon the Congress moving to Lancaster, to procure wagons sufficient for conveying them thither, and apply to General Dickinson, or any other officer . . . , who is hereby directed to furnish a guard to conduct said papers safe to Lancaster.

Although the British pressure continued to be exerted apprehension did not force a decision until on Thursday, September 18th this statement was set down in the Journal:

> . . . , the president received a letter from Colonel Hamilton, one of General Washington's aides, which intimated the necessity of Congress removing immediately from Philadelphia; Whereupon all of the members left the City, and agreeable to the resolve of the 14, repaired to Lancaster.

As the British were still some distance from Philadelphia indecision was excusable. One member of Congress in a letter, dated September 20, 1777, says that the question of adjournment from Philadelphia was daily agitated in the Congress and always overruled. However, at last, action was taken which he did not think necessary. He continues:

> On the night before last it received a complete decision. . . . The movement was made not by a vote, but by universal consent, for every member consulted his own particular safety. I was wakened by a servant about two o'clock, and tho' I lost no time in preparing to depart, yet I did not choose to retreat with precipitation. I was not indeed fully persuaded of the necessity of the measure, and not very apprehensive for my personal safety.

Many others were, however, more fully persuaded of the necessity of getting out of Philadelphia into the safety of the interior. There was a large exodus of those who supported the American cause, but a considerable body of loyalists remained to welcome the British. The greater number of the people, of course, either had no place to which to flee or did not feel that their attitude had been so strong as to mark them for reprisals. The public money was sent to Easton; the Liberty Bell and all of the church bells were sent to Bethlehem and Allentown, and the establishment of government moved on toward Lancaster.

At Lancaster

IN ORDER to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy the delegates, to the number of about thirty, took a round-about way to Lancaster, going first to Bristol and then on to Bethlehem by September 22nd. The official papers of several of the Boards had also been sent to Bristol whence they were finally conveyed, under guard, to Bethlehem. While in Bethlehem many of the delegates attended a service in the old Moravian church. In the next few days the whole establishment moved on toward Lancaster, the

members of the Congress generally arriving there on the evening of Friday, September 26th. At this same time the Pennsylvania Legislature moved on to Lancaster where it remained in session until the 20th of June, 1778.

Next to Philadelphia, Lancaster was the most important town in colonial Pennsylvania. Located on the main route to the West, it was from its earliest days a leading trading center with a special interest in the fur-trade. Its population in 1790 was counted as 3773 so that in 1777 it was one of the larger colonial towns. It had been founded in 1718 and was called Hickory Town until 1730. It was the capital of Lancaster County, erected as the fourth of the counties of Pennsylvania in 1729.

The pioneer settlements of the county had been made by representatives of several nationalities which were then settling the back-country of Pennsylvania, but soon the German element came to dominate in the rich farm-land for which they had a special liking. The people of the county were generally patriotic and the Congress could be well-assured that it was sitting in safety so far as the local situation was concerned. The "plain people," though non-resistants, could be counted upon to give aid and comfort in non-military activities.

The Congress finally convened on Saturday, the 27th of September in the Court-House on the center square, so far as it is known. It is, however, said on good authority

that no documentary evidence is known to exist to prove this assertion. The record of its deliberations does not quite fill a page of the printed edition of the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, all of the business being solely related to military matters which might be expected under the exigencies of the time. For example, a letter from General Conway was read and referred to the Board of War, as was also one from Baron de Kalb to Colonel Richard Lee. A resolution was also passed to direct the Board of War to cooperate with General Washington in devising and carrying into execution the most effectual measures for supplying the Army. Finally it was

> . . . *Resolved*, That the Treasury Board direct the treasurer, with all his papers, forms, etc. to repair to the town of York, in Pennsylvania.

Adjournment was then voted "to York-town, there to meet on Tuesday next, at 10 o'Clock."

The local situation might have been favorable from every standpoint but the general situation was threatening. Therefore it was the part of wisdom to put the broad waters of the Susquehanna between the enemy and the seat of the general government.

At York

YORK, or York-town as it was commonly called in its earlier days, was the oldest town in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna River. It had been laid out in 1741, and had a reasonably rapid growth for an inland town in those days. When the County of York, the fifth in Pennsylvania, was erected in 1749 York-town was then made its capitol. That, together with its location on one of the principal roads leading westward from the Susquehanna, contributed to its growth and prosperity. In 1754

it had 210 houses, with a new Court-House in the process of erection on the central square. This was to continue as the home of the county government until 1841. In 1777 the town had 286 houses and a population of about 1800.

When the Congress moved to York, to be followed by all of the offices of the government, great demands were made upon the town's resources for quartering and entertainment. This was true even in the face of the presence of more than a dozen public inns or taverns necessary for the ordinary business of caring for the travelling public. Many private homes were therefore pressed into service. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Edward Rutledge, Benjamin Harrison, R. H. Lee, F. L. Lee, Elbridge Gerry and Henry Laurens were guests in the largest mansion in the town, which had been rented by General Daniel Roberdeau, a member of Congress. This house was situated on the present site of the Colonial Hotel. John Adams, in a letter to his wife, complained of his hampered and straitened quarters, though admitting that he was more favorably situated than many others. He also complained of the food and the cookery, but commended the church-going of the people. He noticed the tenacity with which they clung to the use of the German language. John Hancock, the president of Congress, occupied the house of Colonel Michael Swope on West Market Street, near the Square. This was furnished him at public expense.

The Court-House provided excellent quarters for the meeting of the Congress, while the Board of Treasury had its office in the residence of Archibald McClean, at the northeast corner of George Street and the Square, where Michael Hillegas treasurer of the United States distributed the public money. The Board of War held its meetings in the law office of James Smith, adjoining his residence on the west side of South George Street, near the Square. In a building at the southwest angle of Centre Square different committees met from time to time.

Only some twenty congressmen came to York in a body for the opening of the congressional session, set for Tuesday, September 30th. The journal notes that they "Met and adjourned to 10 o'Clock to Morrow." Others must have arrived, for the record for Wednesday, October 1, 1777 shows that business was transacted. Among the decisions of that day was the following:

> *Ordered*, That, until further order, Congress shall meet precisely at ten o'Clock A.M. sit to one, then adjourn to four, P.M.; then to meet and proceed on business.

The first matter of genuine significance to engage the attention of Congress was the resignation of John Hancock from the presidency of the body. He had served in this high office for about two and one-half years during trou-

blesome days, and desired to retire that he might soon visit his home in Boston. On October 25th a committee reported that his accounts had been audited, and there was yet due him $1392, which was ordered to be paid. Upon his last appearance before Congress he delivered a farewell address and soon afterwards took up his homeward journey. He, however, returned to York to take his seat as a delegate, in May, 1778. In his place Henry Laurens, of South Carolina was chosen president on November 1st by unanimous vote; he served in that capacity until he retired on December 10, 1778.

The first month of the Congress' long stay in York was brightened by news of the military victories in the north. First, on the very day that Congress first met, came the news of the engagement at Bemis Heights, which led on to the second great piece of news which reached York on October 21st. This was concerning the surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga. In appreciation of these blessings, on October 31st President Laurens appointed a committee of Congress to draft a national proclamation of Thanksgiving. This was written by Richard Henry Lee a member of the committee, and on November 1st the committee's report was unanimously agreed to. This set Thursday, December 18th as the day for observance, and President Laurens wrote letters to the governors of all the thirteen states suggesting their cooperation.

In the great set of resolutions adopted by the Continental Congress on July 2, 1776 the third proposed "That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective colonies for their consideration." This was taken most seriously, and a committee was appointed to prepare a plan of confederation to be entered into by the several states. The committee was composed of one delegate from each state, with John Dickinson of Pennsylvania as chairman. On July 12, 1776 this committee reported a draft of Articles of Confederation. Almost daily discussion was carried on in Congress on this draft until on August 20th the report was laid aside and not taken up again until the following April. During the next six months the matter was very much alive, and after the Congress was seated in York discussions were continued almost daily from October 7th until the final passage on November 15th. The vote of Congress was that the Articles of Confederation should then be submitted to the legislatures of the several states for consideration. They were sent to the several proper officials in the states in printed form, accompanied by a communication requesting the legislatures, as they approved, to instruct their delegates in Congress to ratify in the name of the states. A committee was appointed on November 29th to make a translation of the Articles into French. This translation was sent to Benjamin Franklin and the other commissioners in

Paris who were laboring for recognition of the American Republic by the government of King Louis XVI.

Another objective set forth in the resolutions adopted July 2, 1776 was realized while the seat of the government was in York. The second of three resolutions had set forth: "That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign alliances." Efforts were made in several countries in Europe to secure open alliances with the revolting Americans. At first all that could be secured was secret aid which was more of the nature of a tribute to jealousy of Britain's power than of sympathy with the American cause. France was the best prospect since France had the greatest reason to be jealous of Britain and to fear continued British dominance. However, the French officials made it quite plain they were loathe to support what would be in the end a losing cause. Clearly some stroke of significance in demonstration of the Americans' possibility of winning was needed. Such a stroke was the victory at Saratoga, and the American representative at Paris, then headed by Benjamin Franklin, made the most of it. Consequently on February 6, 1778 a treaty of alliance was signed by the King of France. News of this diplomatic success came to York on the afternoon of Saturday, May 2nd. Congress had adjourned for the week but the bell in the cupola of the Court-House was rung to summon the members to immediate attendance. There

was great rejoicing among all the delegates and all the people of the town, for this was news which went far to assuring the final victory. On Monday, May 4th the Treaty of Amity and Commerce and the Treaty of Alliance were unanimously adopted by the Congress. A committee was appointed to prepare a form of ratification of the treaties and the following resolution of appreciation was adopted:

> This Congress entertain the highest sense of the magnanimity and wisdom of his most Christian Majesty, for entering into a treaty with these United States, at Paris, on the 6th day of February last; and the commissioners, or any of them representing these states at the Court of France, are directed to present the grateful acknowledgements of this Congress to his most Christian Majesty, for his truly magnanimous conduct respecting these states in the said generous and disinterested treaties and to assure his Majesty, on the part of Congress it is sincerely wished that the friendship, so happily commenced between France and these United States may be perpetual.

The Congress continued to deal with serious problems of government in all its branches, particularly with those necessary for the conduct of the war. York was the center of all these interests and to it came many having business, either civil or military. All came but Washington who was carrying on under the bitter conditions of Valley Forge. He

had not yet established himself as the peerless leader, and those who opposed him for one reason or another found opportunity at York to advance their opposing interests. General Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga, had his supporters in a scheme to put him into Washington's high position. Congress invited Gates to York to become president of the reorganized Board of War, and that put him at advantage with many influential people who sincerely believed him superior to Washington, but, what was worse, put him in close touch with those who were disaffected with Washington and desired his removal. The "Conway Cabal" was originated and, in so far as it ever was a serious threat to Washington's position, considerably advanced in York. It is also believed that it suffered its death-blow in York at the hands of others who gathered there but who were loyal to Washington, including La Fayette.

Shortly thereafter Washington began to vindicate the confidence which had been placed in him. The bitter winter of Valley Forge was not without its value, for out of it came a well-disciplined and effective fighting force which the British were to learn to respect. The British force which had captured Philadelphia led a different life than that of the patriot forces at Valley Forge. The Loyalists had opened their houses for festivities, and there were parties, balls, theatricals, and cock-fights for entertainment. General Howe was replaced by Sir Henry Clinton

who shortly came to the conclusion that nothing could be gained by the continued occupation of Philadelphia. The evacuation was delayed, however, until the arrival of commissioners from England who were sent to negotiate a treaty of peace and conciliation. These commissioners came and their communication was read to Congress in York in mid-June. The basis of their offer of a treaty was so unsatisfactory that Congress approved a letter draughted by a committee of that body rejecting the offer, thus putting an end to the futile attempts at peace at that time and under those conditions.

On June 20th joyous news reached the Congress at York. It reported that the British army under Clinton had evacuated Philadelphia on the 18th. The town was wild with enthusiasm. Bonfires were built on the public common; the Court-House was illuminated, and military companies paraded the streets. The news was received by what was very likely the most eminent group of American military and civil leaders yet to gather in York during the days of its use as the capital.

However, Philadelphia was always thought of as the continental capital. Now it was safe again to convene the Congress and to reestablish the public offices there. On Wednesday, June 25th it was resolved that the Congress adjourn on the next Saturday "from this place to meet at Philadelphia, on Thursday, the second day of July next."

Another resolution was adopted at the same meeting to appoint a committee of three to "take proper measures for a public celebration of the anniversary of independence, at Philadelphia, on the 4 day of July next." On Saturday the 27th, the final entry in the journal of the Continental Congress in York was: "Adjourned to Thursday next, to meet at the State House in Philadelphia."

Thus ended a period of great historical significance in our national history, and one of justifiable pride to the present-day residents of York. Memories of those great days still linger in "Continental Square" and through the many markers on sites whose historic interest originated in 1777-8. The Maple Press Company is proud of its "home town" for the part it played in the struggle for independence.

Although the cause of independence was far from won in June, 1778, enough of promise had happened in the nine months just passed to give a quotation from the opening lines of Shakespeare's *King Richard III* a certain curious propriety:

> Now in the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this sun of York.

At Philadelphia Once More

THE members of Congress made their several ways to Philadelphia but did not find conditions favorable for resumption at the point where they had discontinued in September, 1777. The journal of Congress indicates that they did try to follow the schedule set up upon adjournment in York but practical difficulties stood in the way:

> According to adjournment, the president and a number of members met at the State House in Philadelphia on Thursday the 2d of July, and adjourned from day to day, to the present. [Tuesday, July 7th.]

Really, the State House was not the meeting place as Josiah Bartlett, a delegate from New Hampshire, in a letter dated July 13, 1778, explains:

> The Congress meets in the College Hall, as the State House was left by the enemy in a most filthy and sordid situation, as were many of the public and private Buildings in the City. Some of the genteel Houses were used for Stables and Holes cut in the Parlor floors & their dung shoveled into the Cellars. The country Northward of the City for several Miles is one common waste. The Houses burnt, the Fruit Trees & others cut down and carried off, fences carried away, Gardens and Orchards destroyed, Mr. Dickinson & Morris's fine seats all Demolished. In short, I could hardly find the great Road that used to pass that way. The enemy built a strong abbattee with the Fruit & other trees from the Delaware to the Schuylkill — . . .

One week later Bartlett wrote to another friend and mentioned that Monsieur Gerard, the Minister Plenipotentiary from France, will soon be formally received by Congress but no details have yet been settled for

> Besides he will be received in the State House which was left by the enemy in a most filthy condition & the inside torn much to pieces and is now Cleansing and Repairing for the purpose.

In spite of these difficulties Congress did at least one very important item of business shortly after returning to Philadelphia. While still in session in York, Congress had called upon the delegates present to report what action had been taken by their respective states upon the ratification of the Articles of Confederation. The delegates from Maryland reported that their state legislature opposed the ratification until the difficulties arising over the question of western lands should be removed. June the 23rd New Hampshire reported ratification, and New York reported ratification subject to the ratification of all other states. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island asked for amendments but the request was rejected by the Congress. On June 25th a letter came reporting that North Carolina had ratified. A committee was thereupon appointed to prepare a form of ratification, and on the following day this committee brought in a draught, which was agreed to. A resolution was then adopted that the Articles should be engrossed and signed before leaving York. This engrossed copy was prepared and brought before Congress, but was found to be incorrect.

On July the 9th, in Philadelphia, a correct copy was presented and signed by the delegates then present from all the states except New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. There were no delegates present from North Carolina and Georgia. However, ratification by these two states followed

shortly on July 21st and 24th, respectively. New Jersey ratified on November 26, 1778; and Delaware on May 5, 1779, but Maryland delayed the effective operation of the Articles until her ratification on March 1, 1781.

During the colonization period Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut had extensive and often over-lapping claims to land beyond the Appalachians. The Quebec Act of 1774 abrogated most of these titles by attaching the land north of the Ohio River to the newly-established Province of Quebec. The creation of this province was one of the most objectionable features to the Americans of the whole new British policy for North America. Therefore, upon the outbreak of the war with the mother country the states reasserted their claims, and Virginia sent out a military expedition, under George Rogers Clark, to recover her western territories. The prospect of a few more fortunate states winning this rich territorial prize was unacceptable to states without western claims, and Maryland made herself the spokesman for this group. Her representatives early introduced into Congress a resolution that the Western lands,

> If wrested from the common enemy by the blood and treasure of the thirteen States, should be considered as common property, subject to be parcelled out by Congress into free and independent governments. . . .

The states which had hoped to use their western lands to finance the war and reward their soldiers did not take to the idea of pooling them; the resolution did not pass at that time. Maryland stood pat, so in 1780 New York led the way by ceding her claims to the United States, and Congress immediately passed a resolution which contained in it the germ of American future colonial policy:

> The unappropriated lands that may be ceded or relinquished to the United States . . . shall be disposed of for the common benefit of the United States, and be settled and formed into distinct republican States, which shall become members of the Federal Union, and have the same rights of sovereignty, freedom and independence as the other States.

Inspired by this guarantee, and by New York's example, Connecticut and Massachusetts renounced their claims, and Virginia surrendered hers north of the Ohio in 1781. Maryland was now satisfied and entered her ratification on the 1st of March, 1781.

March 1, 1781 is therefore a red-letter date in American history. The formal beginning of "The United States of America" ("The stile of this Confederacy") was made on that day. The Articles of Confederation represent the first American experiment in reconciling unity with localism. Was the Confederation a general government, or a

treaty entered into by sovereign states? In the preamble it is described as a "perpetual Union," but Article II provides that "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence," while Article III says that the states "enter into a firm league of friendship." Each state, regardless of size and strength, had one vote in Congress unanimous consent was necessary for any amendment. The states retained complete control over taxation and the regulation of commerce. On the face of it, the relations of the states were essentially international. On the other hand, the powers of the central government were so broad as to cast doubt on the reality of complete state sovereignty. Congress was granted the power to make war and peace, send and receive ambassadors, make treaties and alliances, to regulate coinage, borrow money on the credit of the United States, also raise and equip military forces, decide disputes among the states, etc. The main defects of the Articles—failure to give Congress control over taxation and trade, absence of provisions for executive and judicial branches of government, and the lack of any sanction for the federal powers—were the results of a general situation. The Thirteen States were not yet ready to grant to a central government what they had just so recently refused to allow to an Imperial Parliament. The movement toward "a more perfect union" was only proceeding. Many harsh realities in the next few years would

compel the people to agree to take the last final steps to create a federal government on the basis of a constitution which, with the laws made in harmony with it, should "be the supreme Law of the Land."

Under the provisions of the Articles of Confederation the place and authority of the Congress was but very little changed, and then, as the transition was accomplished on March 1, 1781, the same interests and very much the same procedures were continued. The principal concern was the winning of the War for Independence. Washington's victory at Monmouth followed shortly after Congress was again seated in Philadelphia and was a cause for rejoicing but soon thereafter the war in the North was a stalemate. The center of important operations was shifted to the South; these were brought to successful conclusion with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia on October 19, 1781. This was in a very large part accomplished by important aid given by both the French army and navy. It was the end of organized military activities although desultory fighting occurred for a little while longer.

The principal interest of Congress was now turned to Europe where its agents were engaged in negotiating the treaty of peace. This was finally signed on September 3, 1783, embodying terms which were all the Americans could desire, the principal one being the recognition of independence. The great cause had been won!

But the conduct and the winning of the war were not, nevertheless, the only responsibilities and critical interests which the Congress had in the days in Philadelphia from 1778 to 1783. Especially after the pressure of the necessities of the war was relieved, other responsibilities and new interests multiplied in vexatious quantity. Not the least of these was the general economic situation which came out of both the War and the new condition of absolute independence. While there had been a kind of war prosperity this was unnatural and peace found the new nation in real economic distress.

One of the principal causes of this condition, as well as a sign of it, was the sad state of the public finances. This was particularly reflected in the unrest present in the army from time to time. Mutiny was in the air. Washington, by a personal appearance before disaffected officers at Newburg, N.Y., relieved the situation there, but events did not turn out so happily in Philadelphia two months later.

In June, 1783 a number of raw recruits at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, grew unruly because their pay was overdue. On the 19th, word went forward to the Congress in Philadelphia that eighty of these men had set out on a march to that city, determined to confront Congress and have a settlement of their accounts. Late on the 20th the mutineers entered the city, and on the 21st, were joined by some veterans who were in the vicinity, drew up in

line before the State-House where Congress was sitting. McMaster describes the events which followed:

> Good order was kept till the can had gone freely round, when a few windows were broken and a volley of taunts, jibes, and obscene jests poured forth. Congress in alarm dispatched General St. Clair to expostulate, but with no effect.

A message was therefore sent for the second time to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, sitting under the same roof, asking protection. This was quite proper as the keeping of the local peace was a responsibility of Pennsylvania. The President answered that he could do nothing for the relief of Congress, as he had at his disposal only a small body of militia, and could not venture to call them out for he was not sure that they would act against these mutineers. Some outrage must first be committed; some property must be destroyed.

On Saturday, June 21st, the Congress resolved that "it is, in the opinion of Congress, necessary that effectual measures be immediately taken for supporting the public authority," and appointed a committee to confer with the authorities of Pennsylvania on the practicality of carrying this resolution into effect. It then further resolved that if satisfactory ground for expecting adequate exertions on the part of the Pennsylvania authorities was not found to exist,

> the President on the advice of the committee be authorized and directed to summon the members of Congress to meet on Thursday next at Trenton or Princeton, in New Jersey.

The Congress' action concluded with a resolution that the Commander-in-Chief be informed of the state and disposition of the troops so that measures proper for suppressing any further disturbances might be taken. No satisfaction being received, the Congress rose and virtually fled from Philadelphia to the safety of New Jersey.

One of the interesting and important acts of the Congress during its sessions in Philadelphia was the incorporation, by an ordinance of December 31, 1781, of the first true bank in the United States. This new institution, The Bank of North America, began operations on January 7, 1782 in a store room belonging to its cashier, on the north side of Chestnut Street, west of Third, in Philadelphia. After many years of continuous and separate existence it was merged in 1929 with The Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities (now The Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts) and so may be considered still to exist as a banking institution.

At Princeton

WITH the end of the War, and the assurance of a favorable peace soon to be formally agreed upon and to be signed, the appeal of the general government, as represented by the Continental Congress, was greatly weakened. In the six-year period which followed the flight of the government from Philadelphia many feared for the continuance of the general government. Particularly was the state into which the last Congress had fallen most wretched. The states acted toward the Congress as if they were dealing with a foreign power. They retained their sovereign rights and asserted them punctiliously against the central government. The reservation of the power to

tax was especially vital in their relations with Congress. Congress was required, under the Articles, to requisition money to carry on the functions of government under its control, and had to depend upon the voluntary assumption by the states of the burden proportionately suggested. The system of representation had always been unsatisfactory, but while the War was raging and the enemy was still threatening a sense of fear had kept the delegations from the several states at least at the minimum of two. With these threats removed, attendance of representatives fell off. In the years following the ratification of the treaty of peace it was indeed rare to have more than twenty-five in attendance and the Congress was repeatedly compelled to adjourn day after day for lack of a quorum. "It is not very surprising that Congress speedily degenerated into a debating club, and a debating club of no very high order." It is no wonder, therefore, that beginning in June of 1783, the Congress was forced to wander from place to place in their search of a permanent capital.

> Driven from Philadelphia by the jibes and taunts of a band of drunken ploughmen, it flees to Princeton, and there, under the guns of fifteen hundred regulars, passes its new resolutions in Nassau Hall. From Princeton it adjourns to Annapolis and from Annapolis to Trenton, and from Trenton to New York. Meanwhile the press is making merry. In

> one squib the Congress is likened to a pendulum vibrating between Annapolis and New York. In another an honest countryman is made to entreat the Lord to make it like unto a wheel, and keep it rolling from Dan to Beersheba, from Beersheba to Dan, and give it no rest on this side of Jordan.

When the Congress convened in Princeton on Monday, June 30, 1783 expectations were not very high. The members first gathered in Colonel Morgan's House, the "Prospect," but soon they established themselves in Nassau Hall, which had been erected to house the College of New Jersey when it was removed from Newark in 1756. The village had been first settled in 1696 but had been given new life when the college was transferred to it. Nassau Hall is described as being four stories high and 180 feet long, and was reputed to be the largest building in the Thirteen States at that time. It remains to-day as the heart of the magnificent establishment which is now Princeton University, one of the nation's best.

During the period of a little more than four months of the sitting of the Congress at Princeton no matters of great import were decided. It was known that final negotiations of the treaty with Great Britain were in their final stages, and on September 3, 1783 the definitive treaty was signed at Paris by the negotiators. Word reached Princeton of this act before Congress adjourned its session there.

Through September and October the question of a permanent seat for Congress was discussed, and a proposition to have two locations, Annapolis and Trenton, for alternate use, pending final establishment of permanent locations, was decided upon. It was agreed to

> adjourn Congress on the 10th day of November next to meet at Annapolis on the 25th of the same month and then to sit until the 15th day of Octr, 1784, or for such part of the year as may be found necessary for the dispatch of public business, on which 15 Octr the President shall be empowered and directed and he is hereby empowered and directed to adjourn Congress to meet on the last day of October following, and so alternately for twelve months at Annapolis and for twelve months at Trenton, . . . , while the Buildings to be erected at or near the falls of the Delaware and at or near the lower falls Potomack or near George Town on the said river shall be prepared for the reception of Congress.

Amendments were offered and other attempts were made to change the time of the alternate residences, as well as the date of adjournment to Annapolis. This was settled by resolution of Tuesday, November 4, 1783:

> *Resolved*, That this Congress be, and it is hereby adjourned to meet at Annapolis on the 26th day of this present month.

At Annapolis

THE first entry in the journal of the Congress while it sat at Annapolis, nine states being represented by twenty delegates, was [Saturday, December 13, 1783]:

> A number of members met [November 26th] according to adjournment, but there not being a sufficient number of states assembled to proceed to business, Congress adjourned from day to day, till the present, . . .

The lack of interest in the meeting of the Congress was the result of the general apathy throughout the states

toward the Congress. It was not, it may well be assumed, because of any lack of appeal of the place of meeting. Annapolis was the pleasant and hospitable state capital with a natural attractiveness. It had been founded in 1649 as Providence, but was made the capital of the province of Maryland in 1694, and in 1708 had been given a charter by Queen Anne whose name it took. The provincial capitol building offered excellent facilities for the meetings which were held in the Senate Chamber.

Shortly after, however, an event of interest took place which undoubtedly served to awaken some enthusiasm. The same day on which the last British troops sailed for home from New York, November 25, 1783, the army of the states entered the city. Nine days later Washington bade a last good-bye to his officers in Fraunce's Tavern, after which he was escorted to a barge which carried him across the Hudson River to Paulus Hook. From there he travelled by easy stages to Annapolis to resign his commission to the Continental Congress, by whose authority he had commanded the forces responsible for the winning of independence. He finally reached Annapolis on Friday, December 19th. On Monday the Congress gave a dinner in his honor, followed in the evening by a ball given by the General Assembly of Maryland.

On the day following his arrival he sent a letter to the Congress stating his wish to resign his commission, and

asking that he be informed as to the manner in which it would be most proper to tender his resignation, whether in writing, or at a public audience of Congress. He was informed that the resignation should be tendered at a public audience, and noon of Tuesday, December 23rd was appointed as the hour of the ceremony. A committee, consisting of Jefferson of Virginia, Gerry of Massachusetts and McHenry of Maryland, was appointed to make the necessary preparations. Long before noon on the 23rd the galleries and the floor of the Senate Chamber were filled with ladies, high functionaries of state, and many officers of the army and the navy. The members of the Congress—still only twenty of them—were seated and covered as representatives of the sovereignty of the union; gentlemen present were standing and uncovered. With the stroke of noon, Washington was announced and was escorted by the secretary of Congress to a seat in front of the president's chair. After a short silence, the president informed the General that the United States in Congress assembled was now ready to receive his communication. Washington arose, and with dignified composure delivered a short and solemn address. After he had returned his commission to the president, the latter thanked him in the name of the people of the United States for the patriotism and ability he had displayed and fittingly expressed the feeling of the American people in general:

> You retire, from the theatre of action with the blessings of your fellow-citizens, but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command; it will always continue to animate the remotest ages.

That same evening Washington left Annapolis and then, attended by the governor of Maryland to the boundaries of the state, hurried on to Mt. Vernon which he reached on Christmas Eve.

The next business of importance was the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain. This was done on January 14, 1784. However this was not to be the end of concern with the treaty and its provisions; for some years the failure of both parties to fulfill their treaty obligations caused friction and hostility between them. By the terms of the treaty the United States came into possession of extensive lands west of the Appalachians. The states had ceded whatever claims they had to such lands, and the "public domain" was thus created, over which Congress had sole jurisdiction. Thus two problems immediately presented themselves: disposal of the land, and the government of the same. Congress adopted right principles in both of the cases. It appointed a committee to take each subject under consideration, and Thomas Jefferson was made chairman of both these Committees. In 1784 he brought in a draft of an ordinance for the political organization of the entire

area. This so-called Ordinance of 1784 was adopted by the Congress on April 23, 1784, but it was never put into effect. It was formally repealed later by provisions in the Ordinances of 1785 and of 1787.

The attendance of delegates from the several states continued to be small, notwithstanding the importance of the Congress as an agent of a government which was continuously confronted with important questions. So far had all public sentiment for a common government sunk that the states were generally satisfied to go their separate ways and look after their own interests. This had the effect of drawing the best minds into the state governments, and leaving for activity in Congress either those who had a passionate attachment to the idea of nationality or those who were not of the most influential class. After a number of items of business of greater or lesser importance had been disposed of Congress adjourned on June 3rd. As was customary, a Committee of the States whose business it was to manage affairs between the meetings of all the representatives had been appointed. These thirteen members continued to hold their sessions in Annapolis to their great discomfort on account of the summer heat. Finally it was noticed that meetings were most unsatisfactory, and on August 19th, a paper was signed recommending to the secretary of the Congress the safe removal and arrangement of the public papers. It was explained that it was doubt-

ful if a quorum could again be secured before the time set for adjournment. It was recommended that the papers be speedily removed to Philadelphia until offices could be prepared in Trenton. The paper suggested that States without delegates any longer present be informed so that

> they may respectively send forward a Delegate to the City of Philadelphia or to Trenton (if the papers and records shall have previously been sent there) in order that a Committee of the States may be assembled, and be enabled as early as possible to proceed to business.

More than two months were to pass before Congress met again. In the meantime the country was left without a government of any kind.

At Trenton

A CHANGE in the location of meeting and an appeal to the states to send delegates seems to have had no effect in improving the status of Congress or indeed of the government which it was established to represent. On Monday, November 1, 1784, all things having been made ready in Trenton, only five states were found to be represented. The next day one more state was counted, and so on Wednesday, and again on Thursday, November 11th.

Those present ordered the secretary to write to the executives of the states then unrepresented and plead for the presence of their delegates. Finally, on Monday, November 29th the session was organized.

Trenton was on the site of a village of the Unami tribe of the Lenni-Lenape. It was a natural place of settlement, being at the first falls of the Delaware River. White men made unsuccessful efforts to settle there until in 1685 the actual foundations of the town were laid. It was one of the more important inland towns, and had many points in its favor as a central meeting place. The place of meeting of the Congress was in the French Arms Tavern, located on the southwest corner of the present State and Warren Streets, on the site of a building in later years owned and occupied by a national bank.

The only action of any significance which appears to have been taken by the Congress in its short stay in Trenton concerned the establishment of a Federal City. Earlier congressional action had requested that a state or states yield to the United States jurisdiction over a district to the extent of twenty miles square, and that all of the states grant £30,000 in specie for the purchase of such land from the private owners and the erection of Federal buildings. Trenton was one of the places most vigorously supported as a suitable location, and this brought on a contest between New England and the South. Then

followed the compromise, already described, of using Trenton and Annapolis alternately, until the matter was finally disposed of. This plan was described by Francis Hopkinson as a brand new mechanism in government, of a pendulum-like character. While the Congress was sitting in Annapolis a devoted citizen of Trenton died and made a bequest of £100 to Congress if that body would settle upon a location in the vicinity of Trenton. After the Congress was organized in Trenton in late November, 1784 an ordinance was passed to lay out a Federal City on the banks of the Delaware at Trenton, and to provide suitable buildings for the use of the government thus permanently established there at a cost of not over $100,000. The whole matter seems to have rested until in the autumn of 1785, while the Congress was meeting in New York, the South defeated the appropriation measure, and thus was ended the plan to make Trenton the permanent capital of the United States. In 1790 Trenton was chosen by the delegates as a compromise between East and West Jersey as the state capital, and in 1792 was chartered as a city.

The short stay of the Congress in Trenton was ended on December 24, 1784 when the journal of the session closed with this entry:

> Adjourned to meet at the City of New York, on the 11 day of January next.

At New York

ACCORDING to the adjournment taken at Trenton the Congress met in the City Hall in New York on Tuesday, January 11, 1785. The city was just beginning to recover from the evil effects of the seven years' occupation by the British Army. During this occupation it had lost more than half of its population and all of its commerce and was twice visited by destructive fires. With the evacuation of the last British troops on November 25, 1783 the citizens could and did turn their thoughts to reconstruction. "The town is ruined by the recent war, but its future greatness is unquestioned," wrote an inspired prophet, and

in this hopeful spirit the work of rebuilding went forward. Within eight years the population trebled, and commerce regained and passed its former limit. In 1790 the Census numbered 33,131 souls.

The situation of the Congress was thus pleasant and the quarters were adequate but even these things did not improve the prestige of the body. Trying days were to be experienced in the four years which were to follow as the Congress tried "to make bricks without straw" to keep the Confederation functioning.

Nevertheless some highly important legislation was now passed by the Continental Congress in the last period of its troubled career. The first act to be noticed was that providing for the measuring and sale of the public land. At Annapolis, it will be remembered, the Congress had appointed two committees, of both of which Jefferson was chairman, to report on some plans for the organization of government in the extensive lands of the public domain and the disposal of it. The first report resulted in the passage of the Ordinance of 1784. Then on May 20, 1785, after the report of the other committee had been received, Congress enacted the Land Ordinance of 1785. This provided for a rectilinear survey of land and a division into townships of six miles square, to be further divided into thirty-six sections of 640 acres each. Land offices were to be established through which this land should be sold

for cash thus establishing the principle of using the public domain as a source of revenue. Although there were a number of changes in detail in the years following, the Ordinance remained as the basis of American land policy until the Homestead Act of 1862. Indeed the system of measuring has never been changed.

The Ordinance of 1784 was never put into effect, and the big problem of the organization of government in the land to the westward was consequently not solved. It was now necessary that a plan of organization be devised and put into effect. Therefore on July 13, 1787 the Northwest Ordinance was passed. This differed from that of 1784 in one respect which was the limitations of its provisions regarding the area north of the Ohio River—the "Old Northwest." For this area there was thereby provided limited self-government. The Northwest Territory was to be organized as a single district, administered by a governor and judges appointed by Congress. When it had 5,000 free male inhabitants of voting age it could elect a territorial legislature, and send a non-voting delegate to Congress. No more than five nor less than three states were to be formed out of this territory, and whenever any one had sixty thousand free inhabitants it was to be admitted into the Union "on an equal footing with the original States, in all respects whatever; and shall be at liberty to form a permanent constitution and State government." Six "articles of compact,

between the original States and the people and States in the said territory" guaranteed the customary civil rights and liberties, promised eventual statehood, protected religion and education, and forbade slavery.

Thus a new colonial policy based on the principle of equality was inaugurated, and the time-honored doctrine that colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country and were politically subordinate and socially inferior was definitely repudiated. The Ordinance of 1787 has been called by competent authorities one of the most important laws of the United States, and a revolutionary contribution to free government. This estimate is not lowered when it is remembered that the Ordinance was passed by Congress during the time of its weakness, only eight states being present.

When it became evident that the Articles of Confederation could not provide the constitutional basis for a very strong national state in their original form, some efforts to amend them began to be made. The amending provision as set forth in Article XIII gave little hope that amendments could be effected. This provision required agreement in Congress which must "be afterwards confirmed by the Legislatures of every State." The faint hope was vindicated by unsuccessful efforts to amend through the provided process. Other methods were suggested, notably the calling of a convention to form a new constitution. It

was evident, however, that Congress would not take the initiative in calling a convention; some other roundabout method would have to be found. A pretext was found in the necessity of calling a conference as a result of a conflict between Virginia and Maryland over the navigation of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Representatives of the two states met at Mount Vernon in 1785. Here it was found that there was not merely a conflict between Virginia and Maryland because other states were involved, and it was not merely a conflict over the commerce on the Potomac but of the entire country. Finally, the Virginia Legislature adopted resolutions, on the 21st of January 1786, inviting all of the states of the Confederation to send delegates to a convention to be held at Annapolis to consider the many problems of the commerce of the entire country.

Nine states appointed delegates, but the representatives from only five appeared at the appointed time—September 11, 1786—at Annapolis. Under these circumstances little could be done, but the delegates did adopt a report of Alexander Hamilton calling for another convention to meet in Philadelphia in May, 1787, to consider

> the situation of the United States, to devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the federal government adequate to the exigencies of the Union.

The states began to choose delegates and on February 21, 1787 a resolution favoring a convention was adopted by the Congress. The latter decided upon the same time and place as the Annapolis convention had done already, but the resolution provided, it was only "to be held for the sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation and reporting action to Congress."

The convention was called for May 14th. The delegates were slow in arriving in Philadelphia, but on May 25th, with only seven states represented, the convention opened in Independence Hall. Meeting in secret session and presided over by George Washington, the delegates ignored the instructions of the Congress and drafted a new constitution. On September 17th the completed constitution was signed by all but three delegates then present and the convention adjourned. The constitution was then transmitted to Congress with an explanatory letter and a resolution indicating the way in which the proposed government should be put into operation. On September 28th Congress transmitted the constitution, with the letter and resolution, to the state legislatures for submission to conventions of delegates in the states.

While the process of ratification was going on Congress did little more than mark time. It had also been provided in the constitution that when nine states had ratified, the new government was to be organized on the basis of the

newly-adopted constitution. Then on June 21, 1788 New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify. Just as soon as Congress received this news it referred to a committee the question of its line of procedure. On July 14, 1788 the committee reported, and a brisk debate followed over its recommendations. It was finally agreed that the day for choice of presidential electors should be the first Wednesday in January, 1789; that the electors should assemble in their respective states and vote on the first Wednesday in February, and that the first Wednesday in March should be the day for the inauguration of government.

The question of time had not been so very difficult to decide but the question of place proved to be most controversial. It was agreed that the capital of the new government should be centrally located. Trenton, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Princeton, and New York, these were suggested. At the mention of New York there was an uproar for there was a certain advantage that was surely expected to accrue to the city which became the headquarters of this new and stronger government. The Federalists were especially bitter at New York's behavior both before and after the constitution was drafted. At one point Baltimore was chosen, but on September 13, 1788 New York was decided upon as a temporary location, it being understood that the new government was free to make a choice of a permanent location.

Great preparations began at once to receive the new government. It was agreed that the condition of the City Hall, in which the Continental Congress had been meeting, was not worthy for the new regime. The city officials could do nothing as the treasury was empty; Congress was as badly off. Then some wealthy residents took hold of the matter and soon had $32,500 in contributions. The building was committed to Major L'Enfant for renovation and remodelling, and was renamed Federal Hall or Congress Hall. It stood at the head of Nassau Street fronting on Wall Street, but Nassau Street was later opened through its site. It is considered by some to have been the first true capitol of the United States because it had been actually prepared for that purpose.

For the few weeks during which the Continental Congress continued to meet, but hardly to do much business, during the autumn days of 1788, the sittings were held in Fraunce's Tavern at the southeast corner of Broad and Pearl Streets. The body in the process of extinction gave up its meeting-place that it might be prepared for the body conceived but not yet born. The remodelling and renovation of Federal Hall was not, however, completed on the day set for the appearance of the new Congress—March 4, 1789. That was of no great consequence for Congress was not nearly ready to be organized. The new quorum of the House of Representatives was set at thirty members but it

was not formed until April 1st when the House took possession of its rooms and organized by electing Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania the speaker. Nothing could be done further, nevertheless, until the Senate formed its quorum on April 6th, when a messenger knocked at the door of the House and announced that the Senate was ready to count the electoral vote. In the few weeks which followed other agencies of the government were set up. On April 30, 1789 George Washington was inaugurated president, taking the oath on the porch of Federal Hall. It was not, however, until the Judiciary Act was passed on September 24, 1789 that the government of the United States under the Constitution was finally completed in that form of organization.

To continue to consider in detail the acts of the government would take us far from our purpose of describing the capitals of the United States; it would entail the writing of the history of the government in all its complexity as the Federal Union was at last firmly established. Attention will therefore be confined only to those acts of the government which now pertained to the establishment of a permanent seat of government, a permanent capital.

This matter was brought before the Congress of the United States for the first time for action on August 27, 1789 when a motion was offered for selecting a permanent residence for the general government. This was by author-

ity of a provision in Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution which, among other things, gave Congress power

> To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, . . .

The first Congress under the Constitution had but few more difficult problems to solve than that of a location of a permanent capital for the nation. This was so because so many of the states were determined to have it within their bounds, or at least their sections, that they prevented agreement, and it was necessary to compromise the issue through a political deal.

Even before the new government was organized the general assemblies of Maryland and of Virginia passed resolutions offering 10 miles square of any portion of their respective states for the Federal City which the Constitution provided for. A Virginia representative laid the resolutions of his state before the House of Representatives on May 15, 1789 and the very next day a representative from Maryland did likewise. The two states were not, however, in hostile rivalry. Rather they contemplated the location of the capital city on the banks of the Potomac river, and

looked for a joint profit in consequence. Later both, by agreement as to the proportion of the whole each was to contribute, offered to advance nearly $200,000 toward the erection of the public buildings, if the Potomac location was decided upon.

The formal beginning of the long drawn-out process by which the selection of the Federal city was finally accomplished came by the introduction of a resolution by Representative Scott of Pennsylvania, agreeably to notice given, on Thursday, August 27, 1789:

> That a permanent residence ought to be fixed for the General Government of the United States, at some convenient place as near the centre of wealth, population, and the extent of territory, as may be consistent with convenience to the navigation of the Atlantic ocean, and having due regard to the particular situation of the Western country.

Protracted and sometimes acrimonious debates followed intermittently for many months. The principal controversy was over the conflicting claims of sites on the Delaware, the Potomac, and on the Susquehanna. The eastern states were solid for a more northerly site, while the southern states were nearly equally solid for the Potomac.

In September of 1789 it appeared for a time as if the matter would be settled but then a disagreement between the two Houses delayed a decision. Agreement was first

reached on a location in Pennsylvania. The House decided on the banks of the Susquehanna River; and the Senate amended the bill by substituting Germantown. This the House accepted but sent the bill back to the Senate with an unimportant amendment, and this action ended Pennsylvania's hopes, since other business interposed and the opponents rallied their forces. A leading exponent of the Susquehanna site was Representative Thomas Hartley of York, Pennsylvania. He was active in debate, favoring the area of the proper size for a Federal city fronting on the Susquehanna at Wright's Ferry. Of course in this area York City should be included. To win sentiment for his objective he published a pamphlet in 1789 entitled, *Observations on the propriety of fixing upon a Central and Inland Situation for the Permanent Residence of Congress. Humbly offered to the consideration of the Honorable the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.* It was set forth that it was written "By the Author," who was indicated at the end of the pamphlet as "Phocian." It has been established that Hartley was "Phocian."

"Phocian" said in part:

> As a place delightful for its situation, and convenient for its distance from the sea, plentifully abounding with the necessaries, and commanding even the luxuries of life, I would venture to

recommend the BOROUGH OF YORK, the capital of the county of the same name. This town, in 39°, 45′, north latitude, is remarkable for the health and longevity of its inhabitants: For climate, water, prospects and other natural advantages, it is not inferior to any in-land town in *North-America*. It contains at present, 412 dwelling houses, 12 public buildings, and about three thousand inhabitants.

. . .

. . . we may reasonably conclude that a CENTRAL SITUATION must be the choice of Congress, and, that they may be secure, and enabled to pursue their deliberations, uninfluenced by the State in which they reside, and free of the embarrassments and cabals attending a large commercial town, the federal district should be fixed in a CENTRAL IN-LAND TOWN—such a town is *York*, in *Pennsylvania*—but its contiguity to the river *Susquehanna* makes it particularly attract our attention.

. . .

As the inhabitants of this county are ready and willing to cede *York* and ten miles square, for the federal jurisdiction, I should esteem it a fortunate circumstance, and for the good of the union, if this proposal meet with approbation— . . .

One of the principal objectives of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, was the sound establishment of the national credit. A new feature of his program was the

assumption of the debts which the states had incurred as a result of their participation in the War for Independence. However, since Virginia for one, had already paid her debt thus incurred, she could successfully prevent Hamilton's winning sufficient votes in Congress for assumption. On the other hand, Virginia had never given up hope of placing the national capital on the Potomac.

In 1790 Hamilton approached Jefferson, influential in Virginia affairs, with a proposition to make a deal through "give and take." The latter did not approve in principle the assumption of the state debts, yet, as he wrote to Monroe:

> Congress has been long embarrassed by two of the most irritating questions that ever can be raised among them, 1. the funding the public debt, and 2. the fixing on a more central residence. After exhausting their arguments & patience on these subjects, they have for some time been resting on their oars, unable to get along as to these businesses, and indisposed to attend to anything else till they are settled. . . . Endeavours are therefore using to bring about a disposition to some mutual sacrifices. The assumption of state debts has appeared as revolting to several states as their non-assumption to others. . . . But in the present instance I see the necessity of yielding for this time to the cries of the creditors in certain parts of the union, for the sake of the union, and to save us from the greatest of all calamities, the total extinction of our credit in Europe.

A few days later the deal was made by the terms of which the federal capital was transferred to Philadelphia from New York for ten years, pending removal to the new federal city of Washington on the Potomac. Jefferson induced two Virginia congressmen to promise to vote for assumption, while Hamilton provided the necessary northern votes for the Potomac site. If Jefferson later complained that he had been duped by Hamilton in the deal, it was because he later imagined new implications. This incident records the first example of political "log-rolling" in our government under the Constitution.

The Senate passed a bill containing the first part of the compromise on July 1, 1790, by a majority of two votes, and the House of Representatives passed it on July 9th by a majority of three votes. On July 16th it was approved by the president as "An Act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of the Government of the United States." Its text is as follows:

> *Be it enacted, &c.*, That a district of territory not exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed, on the river Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Connogochegue, be, and the same is hereby, accepted for the permanent seat of Government of the United States; *Provided, nevertheless*, That the operation of the laws of the State within such district shall not be affected by this acceptance,

until the time fixed for the removal of the Government thereto, and until Congress shall otherwise by law provide.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the President of the United States be authorized to appoint, and by supplying vacancies happening from refusals to act or other causes, to keep in appointment as long as may be necessary, three commissioners, who, or any two of whom, shall, under the direction of the President, survey, and by proper metes and bounds define and limit a district of territory, under the limitations above mentioned; and the district so defined, limited, and located, shall be deemed the district accepted by this act, for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States.

Sec. 3. *And be it enacted*, That the said commissioners, or any two of them, shall have power to purchase and accept such quantity of land on the eastern side of the said river, within the said district, as the President shall deem proper for the use of the United States, and according to such plans as the President shall approve, the said commissioners, or any two of them, shall, prior to the first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress, and of the President, and for the public offices of the Government of the United States.

Sec. 4. *And be it enacted*, That for defraying the expense of such purchases and buildings, the President of the United States be authorized and requested to accept grants of money.

Sec. 5. *And be it enacted*, That prior to the first Monday in December next, all offices attached to the seat of Government of the United States, shall be removed to, and until the said first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, shall remain at the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, at which place the session of Congress next ensuing the present shall be held.

Sec. 6. *And be it enacted*, That on the said first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, the seat of the Government of the United States shall, by virtue of this act, be transferred to the district and place aforesaid. And all offices attached to the said seat of Government shall accordingly be removed thereto by their respective holders, and shall, after the said day, cease to be exercised elsewhere; and that the necessary expenses of such removal shall be defrayed out of the duties on imposts and tonnage, of which a sufficient sum is hereby appropriated.

The other controversial issue was settled when "An Act making provision for the debt of the United States" was finally approved by the President on August 4, 1790.

This had been the main subject of consideration during the last month of the session. Therefore, following the provision in the Act of July 16th for transferring the temporary seat of government to Philadelphia, and having come to the end of the business of the session, both Houses adjourned, according to concurrent vote, on August 12, 1790. Previous to adjournment, both Houses unanimously resolved to express thanks to the Corporation of New York City "for the elegant and convenient accommodations" provided for Congress.

The First Congress of the United States (March 3, 1789 to March 3, 1791) has, then, among other important distinctions, the credit of having finally decided upon the location of a permanent National Capital. When that matter was at last disposed of another stride was taken toward the realization of a "more perfect Union." The days of wandering about were to be ended at last; the dignity of being "at home" was to increase popular respect for the new national government.

At Philadelphia for the Last Time

THE day appointed for the beginning of the Third Session of the First Congress of the United States (Monday, December 6, 1790) found the Senate with a quorum formed and ready to proceed to business. The House of Representatives, however, was not organized for business until the next day. On Wednesday, December 8th the House joined the Senate in the latter's chamber to "receive the usual communication from the President of the United States."

While it was nothing new for a congress to meet in Philadelphia, in this fourth assemblage of a national legis-

lative body there, a new meeting-place was occupied. This was a building belonging to the County of Philadelphia, standing on the southeast corner of Sixth and Chestnut Streets on the same plot as the State-House ("Independence Hall"). From this occupancy it came to be known popularly as Congress Hall. So much impressed was the Senate, at least, with the accommodations provided that on Thursday, December 9th it was

> *Ordered*, That a letter be written to the Commissioners of the city and county of Philadelphia, acknowledging a proper sense of the respect shown to the General Government, by the offer made to Congress, of the use of so commodious a building during its residence in the city.

That they were not later disappointed during their residence seems to be indicated by a resolution, passed at the closing meeting on May 14, 1800, of exactly the same tenor. Philadelphia was hospitable to the end.

Thus the Congress began its last sojourn until, nine and a half years later, it adjourned and prepared to take up its permanent abode. But one exception to the operation of the Federal government through the 1790's in the city was its temporary establishment in Germantown in November, 1793. This resulted from the fear of the epidemic of yellow fever which gripped the city from August through November of that year. However, in October it

reached its height, and through November and December there were only a few scattered cases. Therefore it was considered safe for Congress to assemble in the city again on Monday, December 2, 1793 to open the First Session of the Third Congress.

The period of its last experience as the national capital was probably the most brilliant in the entire history of Philadelphia. Having attained to the position of America's metropolis even by the beginning of the Revolution, it had gone on in strength, prestige, and accomplishments until it fully deserved the designation of the "Athens of America." It had become a cosmopolitan city, the center of fashion and of the arts, as well as the center of trade and of politics. It was the capital also of the important state of Pennsylvania. Its port was the greatest in volume of trade and general activity in the Western Hemisphere, and its economic interests were varied and prosperous. With the coming of a full-fledged governmental establishment the local interest in cultural activities and accomplishments was stimulated and extended by the presence of the great and the near-great political figures of all the continental states, and by the representatives of foreign nations. The result was a really brilliant "Republican Court" which was not to be matched in Washington for a century to come. Its population in 1790 was 45,000 which lived in a well-tended area in which there were already many fine

architectural examples. Owing largely to Quaker influence Philadelphia was well provided with penal and charitable institutions. The tradition of Franklin and Rittenhouse gave it leadership in the realm of scientific interest, and its American Philosophical Society was the common meeting-place for all the enlightened. In literature, in music and in the theatre there was no worthy competitor. The presence of the famous men in the nation's life brought in painters to enlarge the already creditable reputation which the city already had attained in the realm of art. Although Philadelphia was very soon to lose its primary position to New York, in the 1790's that fate was not yet apparent and it cast no shadow.

During this decade many important acts of government, many important national policies, and many new developments in federal government occupied the time and thought of the officials. It is not of interest in our present connection to consider these, except to note that much planning and enactment of laws had to be carried on to the end of preparing the permanent capital on the banks of the Potomac to the southward.

Finally, the preparations were so well-advanced, and the limit of the time set for location in Philadelphia so soon to be reached, that the government began to decide on definite steps to be taken to occupy the new capital. On April 24, 1800 an act was approved amending the Act of

July 16, 1790, and authorizing the President to anticipate the time of removal which had been fixed by that law as the first Monday in December, 1800. The President had previously notified Congress that the commissioners had reported that the preparations for an early reception of the government were well-advanced. By act of May 13, 1800, Congress provided that its next regular session should be held on the third Monday in November, 1800, in the city of Washington, instead of the constitutional date for its assembly in the absence of special enactment. The next day Congress adjourned, and President John Adams issued the following order in pursuance of the Act of April 24th:

> The President requests the several heads of departments to take (sic) the most prudent and economical arrangements for the removal of the public offices, clerks, and papers, according to their best judgment, as soon as may be convenient, and in such manner that the public offices may be opened in the City of Washington for the dispatch of business by the 15th of June.

The President either did not note that June the 15th fell on Sunday, or he deemed it of little import, intending to allow just one calendar month for the process of removal.

The President left Philadelphia on May the 27th and arrived, by a circuitous route, in Georgetown on June 3rd. He left again for his home in Massachusetts on June 14th

and returned to Washington on November the 1st when he occupied the unfinished "spacious building erected for the accommodation of our Chief Magistrate." The departments had all complied with the President's order and they were open for public business by June 15th.

Congress assembled in the Capitol building (the north wing only being yet completed) on November the 17th, according to its own act. No quorum appeared, however, in either House that day. On the 18th the House had a quorum, and also the Senate on Nov. 21st, when a joint committee was sent to the President, notifying him that Congress was in session and ready to receive any communication from him. On November 22nd, he read his communication which contained this important passage:

> Immediately after the adjournment of Congress at their last session in Philadelphia, I gave directions, in compliance with the laws, for the removal of the public offices, records, and property. These directions have been executed, and the public officers have since resided and conducted the ordinary business of the Government in this place. . . . I congratulate the people of the United States on the assembling of Congress at the permanent seat of their government, and I congratulate you, gentlemen, on the prospect of a residence not to be changed.

In reply the Senate said: "We congratulate ourselves on the convention of the Legislature at the permanent seat

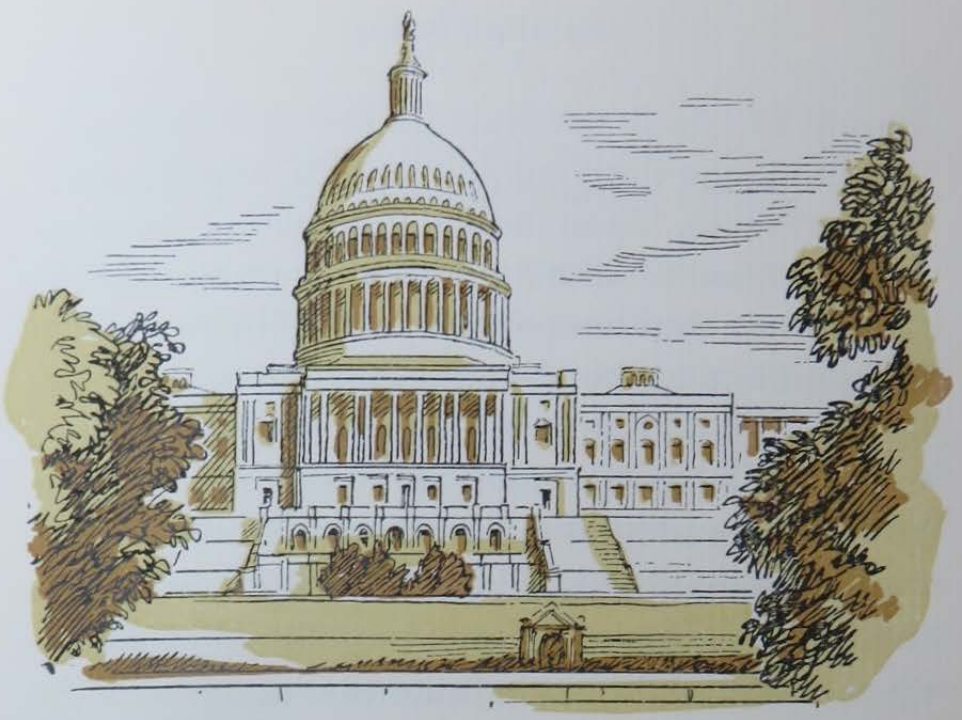
of the government." President Adams replied: "With you, I ardently hope that stability will be communicated as well to the Government itself as to its beautiful and commodious seat." The new Supreme Court, representing the third coordinate branch of the government, held its last session in Philadelphia on Monday, August 3rd (4th?) and adjourned to meet in Washington.

The minutes of the first session at Washington opened as follows.

> At a Supreme Court of the United States, holden at the Capital, in the city of Washington (the same being the seat of the National Government), on the First Monday, being the 2nd day, February, A. D. 1801, and of our independence the twenty-fifth, etc.

A quorum for business was first secured, however, on Wednesday, February 4, 1801.

The only building that was ready for occupancy by an executive department was the Treasury Department building, which stood on the site of the present building. The original structure was destroyed by fire in 1833. The War Department found quarters in a leased house on Pennsylvania Avenue, while the Post-Office Department was in a building at Ninth and E Streets. The other departments had accommodations in leased buildings near the president's residence.



At Washington

SO THE governmental establishment was completely transferred to the first, and permanent, official capital. What had been prepared for it when it was moved to the new Federal city, named to honor George Washington, in the District of Columbia?

The basic law, approved on July 16, 1790, gave wide latitude in the choice of an immediate location. It did specify that the new capital should be located on the banks of the Potomac River but also somewhere between the Eastern Branch and the Conococheague ("Connogochegue") Creek. The latter is a small stream which drains Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and running through Washington

County, Maryland, flows into the river at Williamsport, Maryland, some eighty miles distant from the mouth of the Eastern Branch. Under the law, the President was therefore authorized to make a choice of any ten miles square area between these two points. The President never had a thought of locating anywhere near the Conococheague, but had the surveys made at the eastern extreme permitted by the law. In finally settling on a location he hesitated between lands adjacent to the village to Georgetown and those at the mouth of the Eastern Branch for the location of the city. He chose the former location and on January the 24, 1791 issued a proclamation in which, however, he included a portion of land beyond the Eastern Branch, and consequently not authorized in the basic law. Congress obligingly passed an act, approved March 3, 1791, amending the law to that extent, and on March 30th the President issued a proclamation finally defining the federal district as follows:

> Beginning at Jones's Point, being the upper cape of Hunting Creek, in Virginia, and at an angle in the outset of 45 degrees west of the north, and running in a direct line 10 miles for the first line; then beginning again at the same Jones's Point and running another direct line at a right angle with the first across the Potomac 10 miles for the second line; then from the termination of the said first and second lines running two other

> direct lines of 10 miles each, the one crossing the Eastern Branch aforesaid and the other the Potomac, and meeting each other in a point.

The Proclamation further directed the commissioners, who had been the President's agents in all these considerations as provided in the basic law, to proceed to have the four lines run, and "by proper metes and bounds defined and limited." The area so surveyed, defined and limited shall then be "accepted . . . as the district for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States." This proclamation had been drafted by Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of States, and read by the President when at home in Mt. Vernon. That the fixing of the seal of the United States and the signing by the President is shown as "Done at Georgetown aforesaid," makes it most probably the earliest official act done in the area of the District of Columbia.

On the previous day, March 29th, Washington had met the chief landholders of the area, officially to be proclaimed the next day, at Georgetown. There they agreed by deed, attested the next day, to convey to the President and commissioners all their lands in fee simple, retaining an undivided half interest in the lots that might be sold, giving outright all spaces occupied by streets and avenues, and receiving £25 Colonial (about $66.67) per acre for all taken for public buildings or improvements. Washington called the new capital "the Federal City" and continued

to use that designation through his life. The commissioners however, on September the 9, 1791, in a letter to Major L'Enfant, determined to call the city proper "the City of Washington," and named the whole district "Territory of Columbia." An Act of Congress, approved May 6, 1796, by its title, established the designation, "The District of Columbia" which it retains today.

The President had appointed Messrs. Johnson, Stuart and Carroll commissioners on January 22, 1791. In February Major Andrew Ellicott was appointed surveyor and engineer, and in March Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant was also appointed especially to aid in the work of laying out the city. Thomas Jefferson, not only as Secretary of State but as a Virginian who had for some years labored to settle the capital of the Potomac River, should be included with Washington, Ellicott, and L'Enfant as the chief projectors of the capital at Washington.

Soon the surveys were completed, the general plans prepared, and the legal difficulties ironed-out. Thought was now needed to be given to the preparation of buildings worthy of the national government. The president's residence and also a capitol building were agreed upon as immediately necessary. To secure plans for the construction of the latter, a public competition was held in 1791. This proved very disappointing, but the plans submitted by Stephen Hallet, though not entirely satisfactory, were

judged the best. William Thornton, by permission, submitted a more artistic design, and Hallet was employed to make working drawings of it, and also to superintend the erection of the buildings according to them. But in 1794 Thorton replaced Hallet as architect. The corner-stone for the edifice was laid on September 18, 1793 with Masonic ceremonies by President Washington, and the two wings were only partially completed pending the removal of the government. The south wing was largely the later product of the art of Benjamin Latrobe. The central portion had not yet been erected when the building was set afire by the British in 1814. Reconstruction of the damaged parts began in 1815, and the central portion, with a low dome, was finished in 1827. The building was found to be too small for its purpose, so in 1851 the present north and south wings were begun and finished in 1857–9. The present dome of cast iron, an adaptation of Michelangelo's St. Peter's (Rome) and of Sir Christopher Wren's St. Paul's (London), was begun in 1856 and finished in 1865.

The offices of the government and the necessary halls for the legislative bodies were reasonably adequate. The troublesome problem was where the personnel would live. As soon as the decision was made to establish the capital according to L'Enfant's plan the sale of lots began. It was found that more persons were interested to speculate in lots than to invest large sums in building houses. It was

only natural that the common device of the day for raising money for any sort of new improvement—the lottery—was invoked. One was for the purpose of building a tavern. This was successfully carried through, but the commissioners, adopting the new French fashion, called it a hotel. Thus Blodgett's Hotel was now happily made available. In a second lottery six fine houses and large cash sums were offered as prizes. This, however, never paid off and great dissatisfaction followed. The housing problem was not solved, and on July 4, 1800 Oliver Wolcott wrote to his wife, describing Washington of that day as scarcely habitable. Near the Capitol, he said, was one good tavern. Several other houses were being put up but at the moment he was at a loss to know where the clerks, etc. were to find lodgings unless they crowded into the few dwellings which were attractive. The houses were generally mean, most of them miserable huts, and few in any place. He continues, one could look over an area nearly as great as the city of New York yet not see a fence, nor a house, nor a barn, nor anything save a few brick-kilns and a few temporary huts for the laborers. There was no business, no industry, and no society.

Pennsylvania Avenue, a broad clearing studded with stumps and alder bushes, led northwestward one mile from the Capitol through a morass to the simple but dignified executive mansion. Around that, on higher ground, were

a few hundred houses, mostly of wood, which were the nucleus of the future residential section. Two miles farther to the westward was Georgetown, a comfortable college town, founded in 1751, which afforded a haven for some and an agreeable change from the discomfort of lodgings in Washington for others. The red clay soil of the locality became fine dust in dry weather and liquid cement in the rain; swarms of mosquitoes spread malaria among the new-comers, and inoculated those who remained with a parasitic attitude toward life. Several fine groves of large tulip-trees were the only features of natural beauty within the city limits. Except for scornful Federalists, and a complaining diplomatic corps, everyone, nevertheless, seemed to make light of the real difficulties, and looked forward to some magic transformation of this backwoods capital into a metropolis worthy of its position. Eventually the "city of magnificent distances" grew up to the magnificent plan, but until the Civil War was long past it was slovenly and unlovely compared with a dozen or so other American cities, either larger or smaller.

The people of the United States have every reason to take great pride in our capital city. Building on the original general plan of Major L'Enfant, and projecting the artistic standards of the early designers, the developments of the past quarter century have brought into being the finest capital establishment in the world. Thomas Jefferson, who

had the keenest interest in the beauty of the project and who had contributed so much of advice and inspiration to its early designers and builders, in describing the purpose of Latrobe, revealed the desire which all of those early builders distinctly had. He said that Latrobe's laudable purpose had been that of

> embellishing with Athenian taste the course of a nation looking far beyond the range of Athenian destinies.

In 1913 a critical admirer of the United States, James Bryce, joined with others in challenging the American people to symbolize their national power and unity when he wrote:

> What you want [in Washington] is to have a city which every one who comes from Maine, Texas, Florida, Arkansas, or Oregon can admire as being something finer and more beautiful than he had ever dreamed of before; something which makes him even more proud to be an American.

THE END

¶ *This edition of* The Nine Capitals of the United States *by* Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh *of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania consists of twenty-three hundred numbered copies. Designed by* Howard N. King *and produced under his supervision by The Maple Press Company of York, Pennsylvania. The type is* 14 *point monotype Baskerville and the art work is by* Fritz Kredel *of New York City*

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